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Central Intelligence Agency



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**Prospects for West European Assistance  
in Further US Military Moves Against Libyan Terrorism**

**SUMMARY**

The continuing absence of harsh official criticism of the US raid and recent EC actions to reduce the number and restrict the activities of Libyan diplomats indicate that European leaders are coming to grips with three new factors:

- A growing recognition of Libyan sponsorship of international terrorism.
- An emerging private consensus that toppling Qadhafi may now be the only way to deal with this problem.
- Mounting concern that more negative US public attitudes toward Western Europe may jeopardize US support for the Alliance.

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Each government weighs these factors differently, producing important variations in the private attitudes of key Allies toward US requests for support in combatting Libyan terrorism. Although opposition to a tit-for-tat cycle of reprisals for terrorist attacks remains strong, some West European governments such as France and Italy have promised to react militarily if Libya were to follow through on threats to attack NATO bases in Southern Europe. There are, moreover, a number of hints that several Allies would offer at least passive support to a strategy aimed specifically at bringing down Qadhafi. This would be

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This memorandum, requested by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, National Security Council, was drafted by members of the Libya Working Group of the Office of European Analysis. Questions and comments are welcome and may be addressed to

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[redacted]

unlikely to involve anything more dramatic in most cases than turning a blind eye to US overflights and allowing US tankers to fly from bases in their countries, but France--if persuaded that a combined operation would actually topple Qadhafi--might go so far as to launch a simultaneous assault on Libya's southern battle line in Chad. In any of these cases, turning around one or two key Allies such as West Germany or France could create a momentum that would encourage other countries to be more cooperative. [redacted]

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At the Economic Summit in Tokyo this week, British, French, West German, and Italian leaders approved a relatively tough communique calling on countries to enact a series of measures to combat terrorism. Although somewhat watered down from the original British draft, according to press reports, the final communique went beyond previous EC statements in recommending improved extradition procedures for terrorists and stricter visa requirements for nationals of states sponsoring terrorism. Most importantly, it specifically identified Libya as a state sponsoring terrorism. Short of massive Libyan attacks in Western Europe or strong US pressure, the West European governments are likely to confine their efforts now to amplifying the diplomatic sanctions, drawdowns in economic relations, and police actions already under way. Their increased willingness to take a tougher public position against Libya, however, is a clear indication that they remain worried about further US military action and hope to avert it by being more cooperative on selective actions. [redacted]

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### Reaction to US Raid

West European governments continue to believe that retaliatory raids against Libya will simply goad Qadhafi and other radical Arabs into further terrorist actions. They worry that their support for US reprisals would not only call down the wrath of the terrorists but would also jeopardize lucrative economic ties with Libya and, more importantly, the rest of the Arab world. In every country but France, moreover, domestic public opinion strongly opposes retaliation against Libya (despite widespread public acceptance that Libya is deeply involved in terrorism), and some leaders--notably Prime Minister Craxi in Italy and Chancellor Kohl in West Germany--must reckon that open support for the US could endanger their own political standing and even their hold on office. [redacted]

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